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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the stories of six female principals who encouraged the development of teacher leadership in their schools. The findings emerged from a phenomenological study on women principals' lived experiences with leadership. The document opens with a discussion of the research methodology used in the study, followed by brief discussions of constructivist leadership and of ways to encourage teachers in leadership. The principals profiled here were selected from 12 women principals in a large urban school board in Ontario, Canada. Data were collected through indepth interviews, which were used to explore and to gather experiential narrative material to use as a resource for understanding the phenomenon of leadership. Results show that in each of the six schools, teachers were involved in leadership processes outside of their classrooms. In addition to shared decision-making, the teachers were heavily involved in group planning and consensus-building activities for curriculum interpretation and implementation. Leadership was likened to a series of layers that are comprised of all members and all parts of the organization, and appear to be virtual and changing in nature. The layers appeared when they were required, changed when it was necessary, and vanished when they had accomplished their purposes. Contains 22 references. (RJM)

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Encouraging Teacher Leadership

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Abstract

Encouraging teacher leadership in schools is a challenging and important part of principals' work in the current culture of educational leadership. The findings emerged from a recently completed phenomenological study on women principals' lived experiences with leadership. Discussed in the principals' The experiences and stories are teachers' involvements in school leadership and the actions and beliefs of the principals in encouraging them to become involved in collaborative and individual leadership activities.

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Encouraging Teacher Leadership

Encouraging teachers to become leaders in schools outside the domains of their classrooms is a challenging and important part of principals' work in the current culture of educational leadership. The increased emphasis on site-based management and the development of schools as learning communities require principals to work with teachers to construct leadership environments that promote professional growth for teachers, both individually and collectively. Effective leadership is essential in constructing and maintaining learning communities. In learning communities, principals play key roles in encouraging teachers to act as both learners and leaders in developing common understandings of schooling (Lambert, 1995).

Discussed in this paper are the stories of six women principals who encourage the development of teacher leadership in their schools. Their journeys reflect constant and consistent efforts to keep everyone in each of the schools involved. Janet, one of the six principals, commented "It's a constant struggle to have people feel part of the school". Each of the principals have made consistent efforts to keep their schools strong and vibrant, enabling teachers to work together to construct common purposes for their work. The findings for this paper emerged from a recently completed phenomenological study[1] on women's principals lived experiences with leadership. The following two questions provide a framework for the discussion:

1. In what ways do teachers act as leaders in each of the six schools?
2. In what ways do principals encourage teachers to lead in their schools?

The paper begins with a discussion of the research methodology, followed by brief discussions of constructivist leadership and encouraging teachers in leadership. The findings for each of the six principals are then presented followed by discussions and conclusions.

Methodology

In recent years, theories of organization and leadership have been challenged to include

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[1]The researcher acknowledges and thanks the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for providing the funding for this research.

other perspectives and to consider reality from different paradigms (Capper, 1992; Cook & Fonow, 1990; Neilsen, 1990; Glazer, 1992; Jones, 1990; Immegart. 1988; Glazer, 1991; Greenfield, 1974; Mitchell, 1990). Lather (1986) notes that "Research paradigms inherently reflect our beliefs about the world we live in and want to live in" (p. 259). She further notes that researchers are in a period of shift in their understanding of what constitutes research and scientific inquiry. As an example of such a shift, and from his experiences as an educational leader, Mitchell (1990) used phenomenology to study educational leadership. Describing his work, Mitchell notes that "A phenomenology of educational leadership examines the acts, beliefs, goals, feelings, dreams, illusions, and frames of reference of the total experience of one who is involved in the process of educational leadership" (p. 3). Mitchell also notes that "all who call themselves phenomenologists are not using the same method" (p. 2). He further suggests that phenomenology cannot be equated with an objective view of a phenomenon; instead, the phenomenon must be considered from a variety of perspectives, both subjective and objective, and based on knowledge which is subjective and intuitive as well as empirical. Mitchell's work is one of the few published studies of the phenomenon of educational leadership from an interpretive perspective.

Phenomenology as a method of investigation. In concluding her comments on the meaning of phenomenological research, Tesch (1984) notes:

> Phenomenological research accumulates knowledge on the range of the individual, the specific, the unique. Its purpose is to probe into the richness of human experience and to illuminate the complexity of the individual perception and action against the background of our knowledge of the general laws or regularities in human nature" (p. 5).

She adds that phenomenological studies are based on data collected through such methods as in-depth interviews or conversations which are dialogic introspections, in which phenomenon are explored from many aspects over a period of time. She identifies three phases which tend to be present in phenomenological investigations. The first involves a very broad and tentative conceptualization and a general exploration of the dimensions of the phenomenon. Gradually, this exploration is narrowed down to more relevant leads and in the second phase the leads are filled in and checked. Moving toward the third phase the descriptions are further narrowed down to a prototypical description. In the third phase, confirmation of the protypical description occurs

followed by a pinpointing of the phenomenon. Two of the three types of questions which she notes as being common in phenomenological research include experiences believed to be important sociological phenomena in our time and changes or transitions that are of special importance at this time. The questions which were investigated in this study on women's lived experiences with educational leadership are well suited to the two types of questions described by Tesch.

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) discuss phenomenology as the capturing of the process of interpretation through which individuals define their worlds. In an earlier reference, Bogdan and Taylor (1975) note that the interpretation of human experience takes place through the concept of verstehen - or the "empathic understanding or an ability to reproduce in one's own mind the feelings, motive and thoughts behind the actions of others" (p. 14) which is illustrated in this research through the concept of in-dwelling (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Through in-dwelling, an attempt is made to live within the phenomenon as it is experienced by the other. However, Maykut and Morehouse further note that the researcher must "also removes him or herself from the situation to rethink the meanings of the experience" (p. 25).

Participants in the research. The six principals who participated in this research were selected from the twelve women principals in a large urban school board in Northwestern Ontario, Canada. In order to be chosen to participate in the research, each participant had to have served as principal for at least one school year prior to the beginning of the study, and to have held other significant leadership positions within the Board. The leadership positions considered were vice-principalships, curriculum consultants or curriculum partners, leaders of specific curriculum or program initiatives within the Board, or leadership positions in the Teachers' Federation. The six women who were selected had the broadest sets of experiences and were representative of leaders in early, middle and later parts of their careers.

Data collection. The main source of data for this study was collected through in-depth interviewing. The interviews were used to explore and gather experiential narrative material to use as a resource for understanding the phenomenon of leadership, and to develop a 'conversational relation' with each of the principals in the research (Van Manen, 1992).

Based on the methodology outlined in a research proposal by Fennell and King (1993), the

researcher conducted six in-depth interviews with each of the six participants at three-month intervals over a period of two school years. A total of thirty-six interviews were conducted during the two-year period. Each interview was between 1 - 2 hours in length. Initial interviews were based on questions which focussed on the participants' experiences with leadership, their life stories, and their professional journeys. However, the researcher's questions acted as lead ins for more in-depth conversations on participants' experiences, and were never used to structure the interviews. Following the initial interview, all initiating and guiding questions for the remaining interviews were developed from conversations in the previous interview(s).

As much as possible, the researcher encouraged participants to share critical incidents, in the form of anecdotes, stories or experiences, about the ideas and areas they were discussing. The researcher used probing questions to draw out further illustrations and ideas during the interviews, and to saturate the data base from each area under discussion. While the interviews were conducted in as open a way as possible, ". . . it is important to realize that the interview process needs to be disciplined by the fundamental question that prompted the need for the interview in the first place" (Van Manen, p. 66). The researcher made efforts throughout to ensure that the interviews remained focussed. The researcher also used observation and ethnographic field noting as a second way of data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). These were used mainly to develop a fuller context for the research. These were written from the perspective of an observer, but not a participant observer. They were also done using an open approach such that "The qualitative researcher's field notes contain what has been seen and heard by the researcher, without interpretation" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 73).

Data analysis. Data analysis was an ongoing part of the research process. Following each interview, the researcher read and checked each of the interview transcripts after it was transcribed. This involved listening to portions or all of the tapes and making corrections to words in the transcript where necessary. The second purpose for rereading and checking the transcripts was to prepare for the next interview with each of the participants. In addition to exploring new areas and experiences with the phenomenon of leadership, the researcher used subsequent interviews to clarify and further develop areas from the previous interview, and to verify participants' meanings and experiences (Van Manen, 1992; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Following the completion of the data collection, the researcher began a more detailed analysis of each of the transcripts. This second level analysis was to isolate themes and concepts within each of the interviews. Using Van Manen's (1992) strategies for isolating themes, the researcher initially read each of the transcripts for each of the participants one at a time, line by line, reflecting upon the meaning of those words in relation to the phenomenon of leadership. Secondly, selected parts of each line or the total text were marked and underlined to indicate words, phrases or sentences which revealed the participant's meaning of the phenomenon. Thirdly, the researcher looked over a portion of or the text as a whole, reflecting on the meaning and significance of that text as a whole in the exploration of the phenomenon. Instead of cutting and pasting portions of text on to cards and linking them to themes, the researcher used concept mapping to determine all of the themes and subthemes related to the phenomenon of leadership. Each entry on the concept map was labelled with detailed information about the page number and transcript number where a fuller reference and context for the theme could be found.

Review of Related Literature

Constructing Leadership

Constructivist leadership is a term which refers to a community of individuals working together to construct and develop a positive, community-centred working environment. Constructing leadership scenarios for developing a collective meaning within an organization is an essential component of a learning organization (Senge, 1990; 1995). In community-centred learning organization, developments occur and changes are made due, in large part, to the high degree of commitment the individual workers have to the common environment. Going beyond compliance, the common commitment to shared values has acceptance at all levels of the organization. In describing the advantages of the learning organization, Senge (1996) comments "There is no substitute for commitment in bringing about deep change. No one can force another person to learn if the learning involves deep changes in beliefs and attitudes and fundamental new ways of thinking and acting" (p. 43 - 44). With the number of initiatives underway for developments and changes in schools, Senge's learning organization model provides a helpful way to begin thinking about the development of leadership outside that of formal management.

Lambert (1995) links the concept of learning organizations to schools. She describes constructivist leadership as reciprocal processes through which members in an educational community work together to construct meaning and knowledge. She defines constructivist leadership as:

> The reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose of schooling. (P. 32)

Commenting further, Lambert suggests that since leadership is a reciprocal process which takes place within relationships in communities it cannot be limited to a set of behaviours attributed to and performed by an individual leader. She states that:

> Leadership, like energy is not finite, not restricted by formal authority and power; it permeates a healthy school culture and is undertaken by whoever sees a need or an opportunity. Occupying these "zones," leadership is different from an act of leadership. (p. 33).

Reciprocity, as Lambert (1995) defines it, grows out of many years of meaningful relationships and making meaning with others, which result from meaningful and mature interactions among a group of individuals over time. Reciprocity is a spiraling process, growing stronger with development and more stable over time. Strong reciprocal relationships between teachers, administrators and students lead to a strong sense of trust between people. Such reciprocity helps to develop and foster educational change which is based on a full and meaningful dialogue among participants rather than being dictated from a manager or someone outside the community. There are four characteristics of reciprocal relationships, the first of which is evoking potential in a trusting environment fostered by positive relationships. The second is reconstructing the environment by 'breaking set' with old assumptions and myths. A clear focus on the construction of meaning is the third, and the fourth is framing actions that embody new behaviours and purposeful intentions. The fourth characteristic is the most practical aspect of the four, and is the place where ideas and plans are put into action (p. 35 - 37).

In the second part of the definition, Lambert (1995) discussed participants in educational communities working to develop meaningful dialogue around common experiences which foster common patterns of understanding. The essence of this part of the definition is the concept of community, and Lambert notes that "In our definition of constructivist leadership, the educational

community is considered the medium for meaning-making" (p. 39). She further notes that communities must serve the needs of the broader society as well as the needs of individuals. Meaningful acts of leadership in such communities are those which encourage reciprocity and meaning-making among all community members.

The third part of the definition leads toward the development of a common purpose of schooling. Constructivists believe that, rather than being in place to teach defined and specific bodies of knowledge, schools serve society most effectively by educating students for democratic citizenship. This involves taking a meaningful part in decision-making that shapes the goals and direction of the educational community. By being involved in communities, individuals are likely to become committed to causes and ideas beyond themselves which through ". . . these lived experiences, diversity opens up possibilities, helping us to see the multiple perspectives and world views of others"(p. 47).

Slater's (1995) views of constructivist leadership support those of Lambert (1995). He notes that constructivist leadership is very subjective, and largely created through experiences and phenomenon in everyday life. It is not a product of rational analysis but rather of symbols and rituals from within the organization. He notes that "Whether or not followers become committed to leaders depends in no small measure on leaders' capacity to give meaning to relationships and events. They do this by putting them in context and revealing their purpose and direction, and by articulating values in a manner that engages and captures the imaginations of followers" (p. 465). Slater's comments relate closely to Janet's comments about the challenges of keeping organizational members active and involved in the organization.

Encouraging Teacher Leadership

Encouraging teacher leadership requires principals to move beyond the concept of organizational hierarchy to organizations which are based on participation and consensus building. Professional consensus building, however, requires the encouragement of participatory environments. Hart (1993) comments that, in order for teacher leadership to thrive, efforts must be made to help teachers learn processes which will help them build professional consensus. To do so, Giba (1998) suggests establishing periods of collaboration time periodically in the school timetable to allow groups of teachers to work together on curriculum planning, discussions of

students' needs, the learning of new teaching strategies, or issues and problems common to their work in the school. Part of the work on collaboration undertaken by teachers requires them to learn the necessary skills to take part effectively in collaborative processes. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) suggest that, because teachers must work from influence bases instead of bases of formal authority, they need to develop skills for working collaboratively with diverse colleagues. Teachers are also encouraged to lead through taking part in policy development teams and by serving as representatives on hiring teams.

Hart (1993) suggests that, as teachers become more skilled in the areas of leadership and group interaction, principals will need to develop their own backgrounds of knowledge and skills. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) concur and suggest that teacher leadership is most likely to thrive in school environments which have a strong focus on professional development, collegiality, teacher autonomy, and open communication. In addition, Johnson and Pajares (1996) stressed the importance of positive and open communication. Teacher leadership in their study, which was experienced through participation in shared decision-making processes, was well fostered by a supportive principal who "encouraged people to share their knowledge and speak their minds" (p. 622). Principals also need to support the work of teachers through providing them with sufficient time to work through the leadership tasks with which they are involved. Zinn (1997) suggests that teacher leadership is supported in school environments by strong networks of colleagues, and the support of principals and other administrators. Positive principal support is provided by verbal encouragement, locating and providing resources, providing information and coaching new leadership skills.

Barriers to teacher leadership have also been identified. Zinn (1997) notes that barriers to teacher leadership include lack of time and flexibility to be able to devote to learning and carrying out leadership tasks. Johnson and Pajares (1996) found that time was a factor which tended to constrain successful teacher participation in shared decision-making, particularly in the early stages. They noticed at the conclusion of their study, however, that human relations was the greatest barrier to positive participation in shared decision-making. Johnson and Pajares further explained that "Although [teachers] recognized that conflict and struggle were necessary to group decision-making, they found the strong resistance to democratic change displayed by some of their

colleagues a stumbling block to shared decision-making" (p. 622). Personal barriers to teacher leadership include lack of support from family and friends for their devoting extra personal time and resources to leadership activities, and a reluctance on the part of teachers to be assertive and become involved. Feelings of personal discouragement or too much stress also served as barriers to teacher leadership.

Presentation of Findings

Janet

Janet was principal of two different schools during the period of this research. Janet had been a vice-principal for one year. Prior to that she had been a classroom teacher, a resource teacher, worked as a psycho metrist, and as a language arts curriculum coordinator. Her career spanned a period of over twenty years. When the study began, she was in her fourth year as a principal and her third year as principal of Pinewood School, a kindergarten to grade eight school of 290 students in a rural area just outside the city. The school was a bustling place, and seemed very much the centre of the community. Children were bussed to the school from the surrounding rural areas. Most of the twelve teachers came to the community daily from the urban area near by, however the emphasis in the school was on ensuring that the school was an integral part of the community.

At the end of her third year as principal, she was appointed principal of Greenview School, a large kindergarten to grade eight English/French Immersion school of 400 students in an urban neighbourhood. There were many more teachers and full-time school librarian. The student population in the school was culturally and socio-economically diverse. There was a strong sense of community within the school, and the parent group was very active. Much of the emphasis on community noted in both schools was due to Janet's efforts to develop and promote the concept of the school as a learning community.

Janet commented that, as a principal, her biggest job and greatest desire was "to support teachers, and to try to help them be the best that they could be". She further commented that this was a difficult job, "because when I got out there, I found out how lacking in confidence teachers are". Janet's main strategy for assisting teachers is to develop positive, professional relationships with teachers, and to motivate and support them as individuals and collectively. Janet does these

things by talking with teachers to learn about professional areas which are of interest to them. Janet described how she worked with an older teacher on the staff, who had been in that school for many years prior to her appointment as principal:

> One - I really worked hard at building the relationship. Two - I discovered things that I knew she was interested in and that she did very well. I spent time talking with her about that. Then we started to look at some different ways of doing things. It was incredible to watch this woman blossom.

In discussing ways of working with the teachers as a group, Janet indicated that she did not go into the school and lay out a lot of expectations. To teachers, she stated "Two things: I want you to plan together, and I want you to be asking yourself 'why am I doing this? What's the purpose of this lesson or that activity?'". Janet also supports individual and collective interests of teachers through making available opportunities for in-service and professional development. Teachers can then spend time in the school sharing and discussing ideas. She believed that the many early discussions she had with teachers helped develop trusting relationships and led to the development of a learning community within the school.

In terms of directly affirming teachers' leadership initiatives, Janet indicated that supporting the shared decision-making processes and the decisions which emerge was essential. She stated:

> When something is going to have a direct effect in the classroom, teachers need to be part of the decision, and while you may not like the decision, you have to go with what it is that teachers feel they can manage or not manage.

Janet also stressed the need to support teacher leadership through problem-solving with them and supporting them in developing positive action plans to deal with difficult circumstances. She described a situation in which a teacher was having a difficult time with a group of students. Janet invited the teacher in and asked "How can I help you?". She commented that the teacher looked surprised and indicated that he had struggled for some time, and yet no one before had ever offered assistance. The teacher thanked Janet for being so diplomatic and for her offer of assistance. She cited that as an example of how one fosters trusting relationships with others.

Janet also supported leadership initiatives in others through delegation and the circulation of a 'Monday memo'. She noted that delegating responsibilities to others provides them with

opportunities to learn new competencies and gain experience that will take them into new areas. In her Monday memos she gave an overview of things in the school for the week, as well as updates on curriculum issues. Similar to her conversations with teachers, the consistent availability of information enhanced the leadership environment and increased the level of trust in the school. Using the Monday memo also keeps Janet on track and able to follow through with things which further enhances her credibility as a leader among leaders.

Janet also discussed the importance of nurturing others and recognizing their strengths as ways of encouraging teacher leadership. She cited the following experience in which she nurtured one teacher who, in turn, nurtured another:

> I feel like you have to be nurturing, and many teachers have told me how much they appreciate it. One teacher said to me, "You know, I was really questioning myself". I'm talking about someone who is an excellent teacher, but felt she could do nothing right. Now this teacher is just flying; she is one of the teachers who has applied for a private project. She is doing all kinds of things in the school. And before she felt that she just wasn't capable. I've got her working with a teacher who is being documented, and she has been so helpful with this teacher. I asked her, "Could you sit down and do some planning with this teacher on a regular basis?". Well, she's just become this teacher's mentor and has made a profound difference in this teacher's life.

Janet believed that if you support, nurture, recognize and appreciate people you will get all sorts of positive things to happen in a school. These strategies support those who need encouragement, but also encourages "the movers and the shakers" or the teachers who are risk takers to move forward with initiating new ideas in their classrooms and in the school.

In discussing the learning community, Janet admitted that it is a constant struggle to ensure that all teachers, full and part time, feel part of the community. One of the ways she developed community was through modeling by going to teachers' classrooms and working with them and their students. She stated "I worked with kids, they worked with kids. We worked together". By being willing to serve as a model as well as a leader of leaders, Janet believed she had done a great deal to enhance teachers' initiatives and leadership in the schools.

Jessica

Jessica attended teachers' college, and began her life as a classroom teacher following graduation. She completed her B. A., a specialist in Library, and her M. Ed as a part time student

in conjunction with her teaching. She taught in grades 4 - 6 for 15 years, working about 7 years in school libraries, and spent the last 9 years of her teaching career teaching grade eight. At the beginning of the research, she had been a principal for four years. She served as a vice-principal prior to her principalship, and was extensively involved in leadership roles in the teachers' federation. During the study, Jessica was principal of two semi-rural elementary schools, a kindergarten to grade three school, and a grade four to eight facility. One of her main tasks during the second year of the study was working with teachers and parents to plan a new, larger school which would accommodate the needs of students and families from both schools.

Teacher leadership has been a major part of Jessica's career from two different areas of her work. One major portion of her experience and preparation as a leader came through her work in the teachers' federation. Working with other teachers on difficult issues related to contracts and political processes helped Jessica learn the importance of and the skills for building consensus among groups. Her many years of experience as a classroom teacher also provided a solid base for helping her to develop leadership skills. These experiences have influenced Jessica's responses to the question "How do you lead?"to which she replied, "By example, by doing, by being around, by listening, by communicating, by being with others, by being human, by being human - just being me". To Jessica, these responses were part of the strong human relations skills which she believes she possesses. She added to this list the importance of being honest and helping teachers learn about their strengths and their areas for growth.

Jessica's human relations skills and her honesty were two on the greatest assets that relied on to encourage the development of leadership in teachers. Sometimes, she noted, her honesty required her to point out issues to people which were difficult, but important in helping an individual find a realistic grasp of their strengths and potential as a leader. Jessica cited an example of someone on her staff who wanted to apply to a vice-principalship. Through a conversation with her superintendent, she realized she could not stop the individual, but realized that she could not offer her support to the application for a variety of reasons. She tells the story:

> The teacher could read my body language. He said to me, "Are you not in favour of my applying?" I said, "I'll be honest with you, no I'm not in favour, and I can give you the reasons why". So I went through all of the reasons. He was devastated; I could tell. I gave him all kinds of examples of things that had happened. He asked, "Why didn't you

> tell me?". I said, "I did tell you but you didn't listen to me". I finally wrote the performance review he asked for and when I sat down with him to go over it, he said, "I've decided not to apply. I know what you are trying to say. I'm not ready".

While she felt the need to be honest, Jessica had a very difficult time to contend with this situation because she saw herself as a promoter of leadership in others and never wanted to hurt anyone's feelings. She realized, however, that the only way to really promote growth in this teacher was to tell thm the truth and then support the growth and leadership which began to take place from there.

Jessica worked diligently to let others be part of leadership tasks and to let go of the need to do things herself. She indicated that, after very conscious efforts, "I don't have to chair everything, and I don't have to organize all of the information. I can just be a participant instead of the leader". Jessica further indicated that, "others need the opportunity to grow as well". She added, however, that she was always there as a back-up if teachers needed additional support for their leadership activities. Part of the back-up is allowing teachers solve their own problems, as much as possible, when issues arise around situations with which they are involved. This often means encouraging team work among the teachers.

Two of the strategies which assist Jessica in sharing leadership tasks were the availability of clear, up to date information, and clear, consistent communications with everyone in the school. Communication also included listening, and Jessica works diligently to ensure that she listened closely to the comments and needs of the teachers with whom she works. She added, "You have to get into the staff room; you have to talk to your teachers".

The main area which Jessica believed essential to encouraging teacher leadership was recognizing and showing appreciation for people. She stated, "If you go out of your way to do things for people, they'll return it by going out of their way, too". She shared in supervision work and recognized the extra things which teachers did in the school through thank you notes. "Getting a thank you note out, or getting a little sticky out to say I really appreciated all the time and effort you've put into that" really helps support and encourage teachers to remain involved in the school. She also gave teachers little remembrances every now and then; a candy heart and a card for valentine's day; an Easter egg; a small Christmas gift, and a small gift of appreciation at

the end of the year. Jessica thought such gestures very important in supporting and encouraging others. She stated, "Everybody likes a little remembrance once in a while".

Jessica concluded that, in her schools, she "keeps on top of everything". She also added that, while she had high expectations of teachers, she also had high expectations of herself. She noted that while the schools were seen by some as demanding of time and energy, teachers in them were given opportunities to have a great deal of responsibility for leadership, growth and development.

Kathryn

Kathryn began her principalship ten years prior to the beginning of this research, and at that time, was the only woman principal in her school board. She entered the principalship by being appointed to a small, rural school directly from a two-year secondment as a curriculum consultant, and did not have a vice principalship. She noted "I went right into the principalship. I didn't have a vice principalship. Kathryn had worked in three other schools prior to becoming principal of James Waterman, a large, newly refurbished, dual-track elementary school with classes in both English and French-Immersion, from Kindergarten to Grade eight. With a student population of 650, James Waterman was one of the largest elementary school within the Board.

Similar to her other colleagues, Kathryn efforts went into encouraging and supporting teachers' efforts to work together in small groups to share ideas and strategies. She indicated that it took a couple of years after she arrived in the school to get teachers involved in working together to plan and to reflect on their own teaching practices. Kathryn encouraged much of the development for joint planning and reflecting to grow from collaborative decision-making processes. She commented that, "having teachers involved in the school focus helps them feel that they are in charge of what happens in the school for students". Kathryn commented that, in order to have the involvement "You have to keep the times that you work together happening. So I need to make sure that many of those opportunities are scheduled, whether it's small group or large".

Because of the dual track school, Kathryn indicated that the teachers had divided into groups of similar interests and backgrounds. She commented, "Teachers are planning together and they've divided the groups so that there are certain things that they do as core subjects with

their own classes, but others that involve taking advantage of some of their strengths". Kathryn noted that the group made the decisions based on both needs and interests. She further noted that she worked with the teacher leaders in the school to ensure that everyone was an equal partner in the decision- making and shared the commitment and responsibility.

Kathryn noted that one of the greatest inhibitors to the collaborative work was lack of time. She worked diligently to schedule large blocks of time that ensured ample opportunities to develop and complete required tasks. However, she noted that one of the greatest challenges to her own leadership, as well as that of others, was "finding enough time to do everything". Kathryn added that she "constantly looks at her priorities and puts her energy there".

To encourage teacher development in difficult areas, Kathryn encouraged teachers who were more knowledgeable in an area to mentor and work with a colleague who was less knowledgeable. She cited the example of computers in the classroom as one way in which this happened. Kathryn indicated that, initially, a teacher who was very knowledgeable about computers taught in the school. A number of teachers, who found using computers challenging, did very little with them as long as that person was there to assist them or to do things for them. To overcome this problem, when the teacher left, Kathryn encouraged the teachers to partner with those more knowledgeable about computers. She found ways to cover the classes of those who were being mentored so that they could go to the computer lab as the same time as their mentor. In this was she was able to "use people's strengths" for the good of all.

Kathryn encouraged leadership and development among the teachers through the extensive use of professional development. She set up professional development sessions for teachers who required a more 'hands-on' approach to learning. She believed that other teachers could assist teachers who were 'reluctant learners' more adequately than could an expert from outside or herself. She noted the importance of "trying to look at a balance of keeping people seeing something new, and being excited by it, but not being overwhelmed by it, and not being asked to do everything at once".

Sharon

Sharon had been a principal for eight years prior to the beginning of this research. She was principal of Avalon School, a kindergarten to grade six school of approximately 250 children

in an inner-city neighbourhood. Many of the children attending Avalon had personal challenges brought about by poverty. Sharon entered the principalship after a two-year term as vice-principal, and an extensive amount of work as a leader in the Federation of Women Teachers. She had also been a successful elementary teacher. At the end of her first year in this research, she became principal of a larger, kindergarten to grade eight school in a quiet, middle-class urban neighbourhood. Sharon made the transition to Peter Brownbridge School very easily, and noted that her work with the teachers, parents and students appeared to be going well. Perhaps one of the reasons for the ease in transition was that, upon going to Brownbridge, Sharon indicated that she "tended to watch what was going on, and tried not to make a lot of changes". She wanted to get a sense of the ways teachers and students worked together and to determine the patterns and cycles which were going on in the schools.

As a way to develop and encourage teacher leadership Sharon began to ask "Who can lead in this school?". She then cited the following example of one aspect of teacher leadership at Brownbridge:

> A teacher, Bill, chairs the school improvement committee and he has for the last few years. He's one of the people that I talked with when I came to the school in the spring. He wanted to know what my expectations were and I consistently said business as usual, and that if he was willing to continue chairing the committee, why would we change it? They had developed a three-year plan by that point. The vice principal was on the committee and that is a good thing, because if I were on the committee, I would tend to sort of take some control of it, or express my opinions and redirect it in some way. It is good that it is going in its own direction. To me it doesn't matter what the priorities of the school improvement committee are; that is only one aspect of what we do. If we focus on behaviour for one year, what does it matter? If that is what the staff wants to focus on, that's fine. Bill is quite comfortable providing leadership for that. He holds monthly meetings with the staff where we implement some of the recommendations of the school improvement committee.

While Sharon needed to keep in touch with the work of the committee, she indicated that, as long as it was going well and involving everyone, she was satisfied to have it work as it was.

Other initiatives in Brownbridge for which teachers were leaders included the integration of special needs students into classrooms. One of the teachers involved had developed an excellent format for an educational plan which others in the school have followed. Another individual was very involved in leadership activities for beginning a house league for students in

the school. While initially teachers were not keen on this activity, the leader spent some time talking about it at a staff meetings and then the teachers became more positive about it. Sharon's beliefs about teacher leadership were that "Everyone can lead, they just need an opportunity. They need something they are interested in and want to lead in. Because they are all very competent people, I'm sure there are many things involving teacher leadership that are going on right now that perhaps I am not tuned in to as much as I will be in the future".

Sharon commented that she also liked teachers to be involved in making decisions which affected their work. She indicated that, whenever possible, she remained outside of these decision-making processes in order to avoid unduly influencing them by "getting into a position of pushing too hard". Regarding a matter related to outside supervision, Sharon commented "I don't want the staff to feel that they can't make decisions. They do the supervision. They know what the issues are, and they have to know what they can do about them. It is not a battle that I need to fight. It's not a big battle, so I can live with [whatever is decided]". Sharon noted, however, that for major decisions with very far reaching consequences, she involved teachers in a consultatory way prior to entering a decision-making process to ensure that the decision which was made was one which she could support. There were also some decisions which came from beyond the school which teachers could have only minor involvement in making. In those cases, Sharon did as much consultatory work as she could and communicated with teachers around the issues as much as possible.

Ellen

As a young wife and mother in the 1950's, Ellen was a 'stay at home mom' until her children grew older. She attended what was then referred to as teachers' college in her late thirties, and her teaching career evolved from there. She began her career as an elementary teacher, spent two years as a vice-principal, two years as principal of a smaller rural school, and had been principal of Orangeville School, a kindergarten to grade eight elementary school with an enrollment of approximately 500 students, for five years prior to beginning this research.

Teachers at Orangeville School were involved in the leading of Division Committees and in teacher led planning groups. There was also a good deal of collaborative decision making taking place in the school. Teacher leadership had moved into the realm of student leadership,

and a group of teachers at each of the primary and junior divisions was involved with the development and implementation of student led evaluation conferences. Professional development and in-service work was another area where teacher leadership was involved. Ellen cited one situation in which a teacher did an in-service presentation for her colleagues on the concept of portfolio evaluation because it was something that she had done as part of the vice-principals' training program in which she was enrolled.

Ellen talked mostly about her own efforts to enhance teacher participation and leadership in the school. She consistently stated that her goal was to find as many ways as possible to empower teachers. She was also anxious to work with teachers to "create that community of learners that we are talking about". In discussing empowerment, Ellen believed that, "the most effective use of power is when you can involve everyone. Then the situation become win-win for everyone as much as possible". She added that "'power with' is the way to go. It is a far more rewarding kind of utilization of power". Ellen believed that the concept of empowerment best supported the kind of shared leadership model which she was working with teachers to have at Orangeville. She commented that in order to develop shared leadership in schools, principals must be prepared and willing to delegate some of the leadership tasks and responsibilities to others.

Ellen also equated much about shared leadership to learning together. She commented that "We are a learning community, and if we aren't learning, our kids aren't going to be learning either" In order to maintain a learning community, Ellen believed there needs to be a clearly articulated shared vision, which serves as a guide for the group, an environment which is positive, supportive, and open, and ensuring that the tough issues related to the organization are regularly confronted so that they do not become big issues.

Commenting on the need for shared decision-making in schools, Ellen noted that "we have to work as a team". She noted that, to be effective, leaders have to get all of their players involved. She added that "a leader needs to be someone who is very confident in themselves as a person. They have to be able to say 'I don't know how to do this. I need your help', or 'let's find someone who knows, I made a mistake here'. That kind of person has to be a leader; someone who really cares about people". Ellen later commented that "leadership is a very positive

approach; people feel that they are valued as people first". She added however, that you have to have high expectations for everyone in the organization.

Lynda

Lynda was the youngest and least experienced of the six principals, having been a principal for only three years prior to the beginning of this research. At the beginning of this research, she had just opened an refurbished dual-track, French immersion and English, kindergarten to grade eight school in a well-established urban neighbourhood. Phil James School had an enrollment of approximately 500 students. The student body consisted partly of children from the neighbourhood and partly of students who were bussed to Phil James School because of the French Immersion programs being offered. Lynda was particularly well suited to this school because of her bilingual francophone background. Prior to her work as principal in a smaller dual track school, Lynda had been a vice principal and a well-respected curriculum consultant in the Board.

Teacher leadership was of the utmost importance to Lynda in her work at Phil James School. She indicated that she had solid teacher leadership in the intermediate division from a group of teachers who had an excellent rapport with students, and who planned all aspects of their work very thoroughly. Lynda commented that "[The teachers] plan everything from A to Z and they carry it through". From Lynda's perspective, "it's just a question of 'does this conflict?', and of giving my opinion either administratively or as a parent". Lynda acknowledged that there was also strong teacher leadership in the other two divisions. She noted that the teachers who were older and more experienced had an easier time leading, however, teachers with less experience "need to be nourished".

In terms of nourishing teacher leaders, Lynda indicated that one of the best ways was to allow them to solve their own problems. She cited the following example as an illustration:

> If a teacher comes up to me and says "look, I've go this problem". You don't take it from them. You say "Well what can you do about it" and you help them come to a solution. Let them telephone the parent and explain that one. Don't take it away from them. Let them handle it. Only through experience will they gain confidence. If they make enough phone calls to parents they'll gain the confidence.

While Lynda does not abandon teachers with a difficult situation they cannot successfully

manage, she also does not remove the responsibility of solving the problem from the teacher. Lynda strongly believed that teachers develop as leaders, gaining confidence and competence, through experience.

In addition to emphasizing experiences as a way of developing teacher leadership, Lynda also encourages teachers to develop in their areas of teaching expertise. She commented "Every staff member is different and everyone has something to contribute. Staff member A is excellent at computers, so I'll trade off with them. I'll do their science and they will do my computers". While teacher leadership in curriculum planning was emphasized, teachers also led in skills related to problem-solving and conflict resolution. Lynda also saw encouraging teachers to share their various areas of expertise as a way of recognizing them, professionally and personally, for the special things which they bring into the school. She also commented on the need to recognize teachers for other ways in which they contribute to the school. Lynda stated:

> Teachers need little fuzzies all the time. For instance, noticing little things and bringing them to everyone's attention, but without embarrassing them. For instance, someone gave us the idea about setting up a schedule here for visits from students, and it was an excellent idea. In my Monday Memo I wrote that this is a new thing that is going to happen. Thank you very much to so-and-so for giving us the idea.

In discussing the traits which, for Lynda, characterize many of the teachers who are leaders in the school, she indicated that they are strong time managers, firm and consistent, and set clear standards for students' work and behaviour. These teachers were strong communicators, and took the initiative in calling parents regularly to keep them aware of their child's progress at school. These people displayed a very strong understanding of children and had good senses of humour. Their knowledge of curriculum and standards of work was very strong. Another of the important strengths of these teacher leaders was in student discipline. Their greatest strengths in the area come from the fact that they were liked and respected by the students. Therefore very little discipline was required.

Lynda also noted that a good deal of teacher leadership in the school occured through teaming with other teachers. This was particularly so in relation to student discipline. The teachers worked together in teams to ensure that all of the standards and expectations were clear and the same for everyone. When teachers worked together on leadership, students benefitted

from a common focus and a common set of standards of behaviour and curriculum. Lynda's concerns about and actions to encourage the efforts of the teacher leaders in Phil James School seemed to be well summarized in the poster about leadership which was on the wall of her office. She commented "This is me, I think. Determine the direction, set the pace, and applaud the spirit. I hope that is what I am doing. Everyone keeps telling me that's the way it is. Others may have indeed perceived Lynda in these ways. She was appointed a superintendent in the Board just one year after the conclusion of these interviews.

Discussion

Teachers as Leaders

In each of the six schools, teachers were involved in leadership processes outside of their classrooms in various ways . Emphasis on planning in collaborative groups and involvement in shared decision making were two of the main ways which were discussed by principals. Janet emphasized the importance of teachers being involved in making decisions "when something is going to have a direct effect on the classroom". Sharon also emphasized the shared decision-making approach among teachers in her example about the issues of playground supervision. Citing that teachers "know what the issues are and . . . know what they can do about them", Sharon indicated that she preferred to stay out of the decision-making process on such issues, and to support the teachers' decisions regarding those matters. Using Lambert's (1995) metaphor, both Sharon and Janet realized when they could relinquish or expand some of the 'zones of leadership' (p. 33) in the school to include or emphasize teacher leadership.

In addition to shared decision-making, the teachers were heavily involved in group planning and consensus building activities for curriculum interpretation and implementation. Emphasized in their activities were the Lambert's (1995) concept of reciprocity, which is based on a sharing of ideas among the teachers, and also between teachers and administrators. Kathryn and Ellen both discussed their actions in relation to group planning. Ellen commented that the teachers "saw her more as a teacher than a principal" in group planning situations. Janet was insistent that teachers plan together in the schools where she served as principal. She indicated that, upon first entering a school as a new principal, planning together was the only request she

made of teachers. Kathryn emphasized Senge's (1995) notion of collaborative commitment, in that she used the group planning model as a way to enhance commitment to the school and consensus building among teachers. She also pointed out the value of group planning to promote mentoring of less experienced teachers by those with more experience. Kathryn's examples, similar to Janet's were also related to Lambert's concept of reciprocity among leaders.

Ellen emphasized teacher leadership through the concept of schools as learning communities (Lambert, 1995) or learning organizations (Senge, 1990). She believed that the learning aspect of an organization was essential in supporting teachers and administrators as they worked to set positive examples for children to follow. Much like Senge (1995) and Lambert (1995), who believe that learning together on a continuous basis develops commitment to colleagues and the organization rather than merely compliance, Ellen stressed constant team work and clearly articulating a common vision. She also supported the concept of rotating leadership, using the metaphor of wild geese on their migration flights. The flock of geese have a very strong common vision which guides them on their journey. As one leader grows weary, it drops further back in the formation and another goose flies forward to take its place and continue to lead the group with the same vigour and determination as the first one.

Teacher leadership in the six schools also involved individual acts of leadership within their schools. Teachers used their capabilities and interests and a basis for being successfully undertaking these leadership scenarios. Janet's example of the teacher assisting and mentoring the colleague who was under documentation serves as an example of how one teacher provided leadership for another. Sharon's example of Bill, the leader of the school improvement committee is another example of how an individual's talents and interests were being used effectively for teacher leadership. Sharon's support of Bill's work, by encouraging him to develop group leadership skills, was similar to examples cited by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996). They suggested that teachers' potential for leadership is greatly enhanced when they learn the skills required to do the work, and when they have the support of the formal leadership in the organization.

Principals' Encouragement of Teacher Leadership

Throughout this research, from a variety of different perspectives and a variety of different

ways, there was evidence of principals encouraging teachers to become involved in the decision-making and leadership within their schools. Early in conversations with Lynda, she cited examples of ways that teachers were leading in Phil James school. She cited examples of how a teacher took the leadership role for developing and coordinating the science fair in the school. She also commended the leadership of the teachers in the intermediate division for their ways of dealing with difficulties in student discipline. Ellen and Kathryn both cited examples of division committee leadership and general levels of shared decision-making which took place in the schools. Each of the six principals discussed many aspects of teacher involvement and spoke very positively of the work which teachers were doing together.

In looking at the ways used by the principals to encourage teacher leadership and collaboration, a number of common elements were noted. Each of the six principals believed in the need for teachers to have time to plan collaboratively. Each principal made solid and consistent efforts to set aside as much time as possible for that to occur. The principals also placed a great deal of emphasis on professional development and on having a professional development plan for the school which included collective involvement and decision-making, but also provided opportunities to individual teachers to develop their own special talents. This was similar to suggestions by Hart (1993) and Giba (1998) who discussed the importance of allowing adequate time and providing adequate professional development to ensure collaborative environments in schools. One of the most interesting and positive things which occurred in this research process was an afternoon professional development session in which Ellen and the teachers at Orangeville school were involved. At the beginning of the session, each person, including Ellen, put on a t-shirt which read 'All of us are smarter than any one of us'. The group then moved into the discussion of some key ideas and decisions which they had to make in a very equal and participatory way. Everyone was involved, giving opinions, sharing ideas, in a manner very similar to that described by Johnson and Pajares (1996) in their discussion of findings on factors which support shared decision-making.

Sharon discussed the need to give teachers room to move and discuss issues and solutions and ideas, free from her influence. She indicated, however, that she needed to set enough parameters before beginning the discussions that she would be able to live with the outcome of the

teachers' decisions regardless of what they were or how they might differ from her own. Janet also discussed the importance of talking with teachers early in a decision-making process to plant key ideas and to develop trust between herself and teachers. Open communication was stressed by Hart (1993), Zinn (1997), Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996), and Johnson and Pajares (1996).

Zinn (1997) notes that human relations are the greatest deterrent to positive participation in teacher leadership in schools. Each of the six principals have strong human relations skills, and used their own skills to model positive relationships and positive messages to teachers, students and others in their learning community. One of the areas in which the principals of these schools might want to concentrate more time, depending on the needs of the teachers involved, would be on the teaching of negotiating skills or other kinds of human relations skills and abilities, which would enhance participation and leadership at all levels. Each of the principals appeared to have sufficient levels of self-awareness to realize if and when they required more learning of different types of human relations skills and abilities as suggested by Hart (1993) and Zinn (1997). Each principal was secure and confident enough in their own beliefs and abilties to be able to provide a meta-framework for the leadership of layers of leadership within their schools.

Conclusions

The concept of layers of leadership in schools has emerged as one from this study on which to conduct further research. The layers concept of leadership is not simply a bureaucratic model with a new name. Instead, the layers of leadership are comprised, at various times, of all members of the organization from all parts of the organization - teachers, students and staff, and appear to be virtual and changing in nature. On some occasions, individuals with formal leadership responsibilities normally related to the 'top' of an organization were found part way down a layer or even at the bottom of a layer, which those within others aspects of the organization were providing the leadership at the top portion of the layer. The layers appeared as they were required, changed when necessary, and vanished when they had accomplished their purposes. The layers concept is an example of constructivist leadership (Lambert, 1995) in action. This concept is likely to become increasingly important to organizations of the future, including schools, as they seek to become and are required to be learning communities or learning organizations (Senge, 1995).

The emphasis which the six principals placed on the concept of teacher leadership is well-placed and will continue to be even more important as organizations are required to change continually to meet the educational needs of a rapidly changing world. Ensuring that teachers have the skills to collaborate effectively with others and to work in a team approach with individuals whose experiences and views are very different from their own will be a particularly important requirement in the future. Principals will have to be even more open to continuing in their own learning in these areas, and Boards will be required to be much more responsive in ensuring that administrators in schools have opportunities to learn and develop their human relations skills and abilities. An increased emphasis will also be required on these areas in formal education programs which provide the basic qualifications for teacher and administrator certification programs. These skills can no longer be left to being learned through informal means. Without a solid grounding in human relations, leadership, and in particular, teacher-shared leadership is likely to fail.

The purposes of this paper were to discuss principals' experiences with encouraging teacher leadership. The contributions of this and other studies of lived experiences, which are conducted through phenomenological methods, include thorough and actual descriptions of experiences and concepts which serve as living examples of concepts as they appear in the everyday lives of people. By inverting the top-down leadership paradigm, and thinking of the concept of leadership in less familiar terms such as cooperative, collaborative, bottom-up, or virtual, true progress will be made toward helping teacher leadership become a more common and accepted aspect of leadership in schools.

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